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HOME Front



Good Old Summertime

Who doesn't love this time of year? It's a season for the senses. The smell of flowering things and freshly cut grass; the sounds of happy kids shrieking in the sprinkler, the tantalizing aroma of a steak grilling on the barbeque? More precisely, how about flank steak with charred corn salad (pg. 62)?

Walking the neighbourhood renews our conversations with neighbours and even weeding the garden gets us back in regular commune with the earth. If you don't have room in your own back yard, you can still gather with like-minded green thumbs in community gardens (pg. 56).

Speaking of earth, several features in our summer issue will get you thinking about our green motivations. What prompts you to live differently? Ethics and values? Saving money? A gentle footprint? We look at a variety of ROI (return on investment) options in the pursuit of a greener lifestyle. See stories on page 36 and 46.

We all know that xeriscaping is a fantastic way to landscape if you want a water-saving low maintenance yard. The Buhr family in Martensville puts that idea on steroids (pg. 10). When you've got your yard just how you like it, check out our piece on outdoor furniture (pg. 22) so you have the best vantage point from which to admire your work.

We've even added a survival kit of information on fending off that most

notorious summer visitor: the mosquito (pg. 23). If you're not into just swinging at mosquitoes, how about swinging a club instead? The satisfying thwack of a golf ball launching from the tee box can be music to your ears; we're talking in your own backyard (pg. 41).

Want to know more about the elusive succulent plant family? Take a look at the story starting on page 17 where we talk about how to bring these beautiful plants into and around your home. This story is a personal favourite of mine, and check out page 18 (go on, you can do it now...) this is a photo of the 'living wall' in the front entry of my own home. I just hung it up recently and am very excited about how it adds life to my decor - quite literally.

We're proud to bring you this stack of summertime reading. As always, we'd love to hear from you. If you are green or convenience motivated, and want to read a digital copy (and all back issues) of our magazine, we've got an app for that! Go to the App Store or online at our website (www.saskatoon-home.ca).

In the meantime, bask in the glory that is Saskatoon summer and we'll see you again this fall.

AMANDA SOULODRE
OWNER & PUBLISHER

Suggestions? Comments? Questions? Want to see back issues of HOME? Visit www.saskatoon-home.ca

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Thank You To Our Summer Issue Reader Panel



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INTERESTING STORIES, SELECTED BY INTERESTING PEOPLE

Saskatoon HOME is proud to present our Summer 2013 Reader Panel – people from Saskatoon who helped us select the stories for this issue.

We are dedicated to Saskatoon content. There are lots of great things to write about – but which subjects will most interest our readers? To help us make that decision, we first create a list of possible story ideas. We give them to our reader panel

for their individual feedback and ranking, then compile the results to determine our final story list.

You don't need any special skills to be on our panel, and the time required is minimal. The only qualification is your sincere opinion as a reader. Your single task will be to look at the story suggestions and rank them in order of your preference. 

If you would like more information on being on a future reader panel, email info@saskatoon-home.ca with the subject line 'Reader Panel'.

We look forward to your interest – and your opinion!

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Habitat for Humanity ReStore

REINVIGORATE YOUR RENOVATIONS WITH RESTORE



Photo Courtesy: Jessica Storozuk

When you're renovating, finding the right price on the materials you need is critical to staying on budget. Luckily, it's easy to be a bargain hunter in Saskatoon with an outlet like Habitat for Humanity's ReStore.

Smart renovators know where to find the best deals, and ReStore is a place that shrewd shoppers flock to. Plus, not only can you save money, you can also find unique items that aren't available anywhere else.

ReStore stocks furniture, home accessories, building materials, and appliances, and buying from this home improvement outlet is a

surefire way to give your home character, or find the right materials to fit your character home.

The outlet resells new and used building materials and home furnishings that are donated from manufacturers, commercial builders, malls, restaurants, hotels, schools, and individuals. Proceeds from the ReStore supports the work of Habitat for Humanity Saskatoon.

It's like a thrift store for building materials, with some feel-good benefits. You get the thrill of finding a bargain, and the satisfaction of knowing you're making a difference, both for the environment,

and for your own community.

The trend of building or renovating homes using recycled materials continues to grow. Companies like Braid Flooring and many others around Saskatoon send their extra product to the ReStore which can then be sold to the public. Every year the ReStore diverts 250 tons of product from the landfill, making it one of Saskatoon's biggest recyclers.

Most everyone has heard of Habitat for Humanity as a non-profit that helps create homes for low income families, but the ReStore is also making a name for itself. There are 825 Habitat for Humanity ReStores in the

U.S. and Canada.

There are some amazing finds waiting for you. Just search "ReStore" on the online ideabook creator Houzz, and you'll see all the creative ways people have used what they've found at ReStores across North America. 

Ashleigh Mattern

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LIKE A DESERT OASIS

LOW TO NO MAINTENANCE OUTDOOR IDEAS



AVIVA ZACK



DANIEL BELHUMEUR



Tucked away on a quiet Martensville crescent is a home that upon first glance looks similar to others on the block. Look closer and the differences become more obvious. The Buhr family's yard is almost completely maintenance-free.

Three years ago when Russ Buhr was building his new home, he knew that he wanted a low maintenance yard. His family lived on an acreage for years, and there was constantly a long to-do list to keep up the landscape, leaving little time to enjoy the fruits of his labour. Russ decided the only tool he wanted to wield in his new yard was a garden hose.

As owner of Stone Temple Decorative Concrete (STDC), Russ had a lot of creative ideas and all the materials he needed. In 2011, one year after the home was built, his low maintenance yard was completed in just a few short weeks. Coloured rock spread around much of the yard proved too hard to walk on, so the following summer the Buhrs switched to artificial turf, which was laid in just one day. "We save on water and gas for the lawnmower," says Russ, "and it's always green."

Perhaps the most unique element of this hands-free property is a variety of cacti in the front and back yards. At a car show in Phoenix, Russ discovered a company called Desert Steel, makers of raw galvanized metal cacti. Each is individually hand crafted, and is intended to realistically represent natural cacti that cannot grow in our climate. The cacti have been treated with an acid to produce unique colours and they age

naturally in the elements. In fact, their weathered realism increases over time.

Russ also imported glass reinforced concrete from a supplier in the U.S. in its raw state, which STDC makes into boulders and planters. These faux boulders and planters can easily be moved around the yard, since they are lightweight. To look more natural, Russ stained each one to blend into the landscape.

When it came to the concrete for their home, in both the front and back, Russ wanted to highlight a few different techniques.

On his driveway, he installed fractured cypress slate, with subtle two-foot wide borders in stone. Long-treaded stairs are a signature design of STDC and Russ uses these in both front and back. Seamless textured concrete simulates pieces of stone with broken rock edges. This makes for a unique look and better blends the stairs into their landscape.

The concrete in the backyard has the same seamless veiny-look of fractured earth also used beside the garage. Along with the fun pops of red found in a few areas around the Buhrs' yard, different natural shades of concrete look similar to multi-coloured natural rocks. Colours range from stone grey to black to russet red to browns with a bit of platinum grey.

These shades are the latest trend towards neutral colours that most closely mimic nature. Gone are the once popular terra-cottas and orange-browns. ➡







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The Buhrs' yard has fun pops of red alongside a palette of natural colours.

Instead more timeless natural colours are what STDC installs in many recent projects.

Having a natural-looking low maintenance yard can be simple even in our climate, as long as it is properly planned and designed. Russ stresses when opting for a low maintenance yard like his, to "always plan for adequate slopes so that drainage moves away from your home." He also recommends homeowners to get a professional designer involved, especially for larger-scale yard projects.

Russ credits his friend and mentor Bob Harris in Temple, Georgia, for inspiration. Bob used to work for Disney and was constantly challenged to create unique and realistic looking concrete projects. He now runs the Decorative Concrete Institute in the U.S., and provides his expertise to Russ and many others in the industry. Russ has successfully achieved what he set out to build only a few short years ago: 



A seamless veiny-look concrete was selected beside the garage and in the backyard.



Russ stained the glass reinforced concrete boulders to blend naturally with his yard.

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Russ has just one more project he wants to complete – glass railings behind the BBQ for wind protection and a bit of added privacy and elegance. After that, their low maintenance yard will be done. Instead of pulling out the lawnmower this summer, Russ will put his feet up amongst his always-green lawn and metal cacti. He can relax in his southwestern desert on his quiet crescent in the heart of the prairies. 

Aviva Zack



Long-treaded stairs with jaded rock overhang create texture in this space.



Metal cacti require no maintenance and appear more realistic as they weather naturally over time. Each cacti is individually hand crafted by the company that Russ bought the metal cacti from in the United States called Desert Steel.



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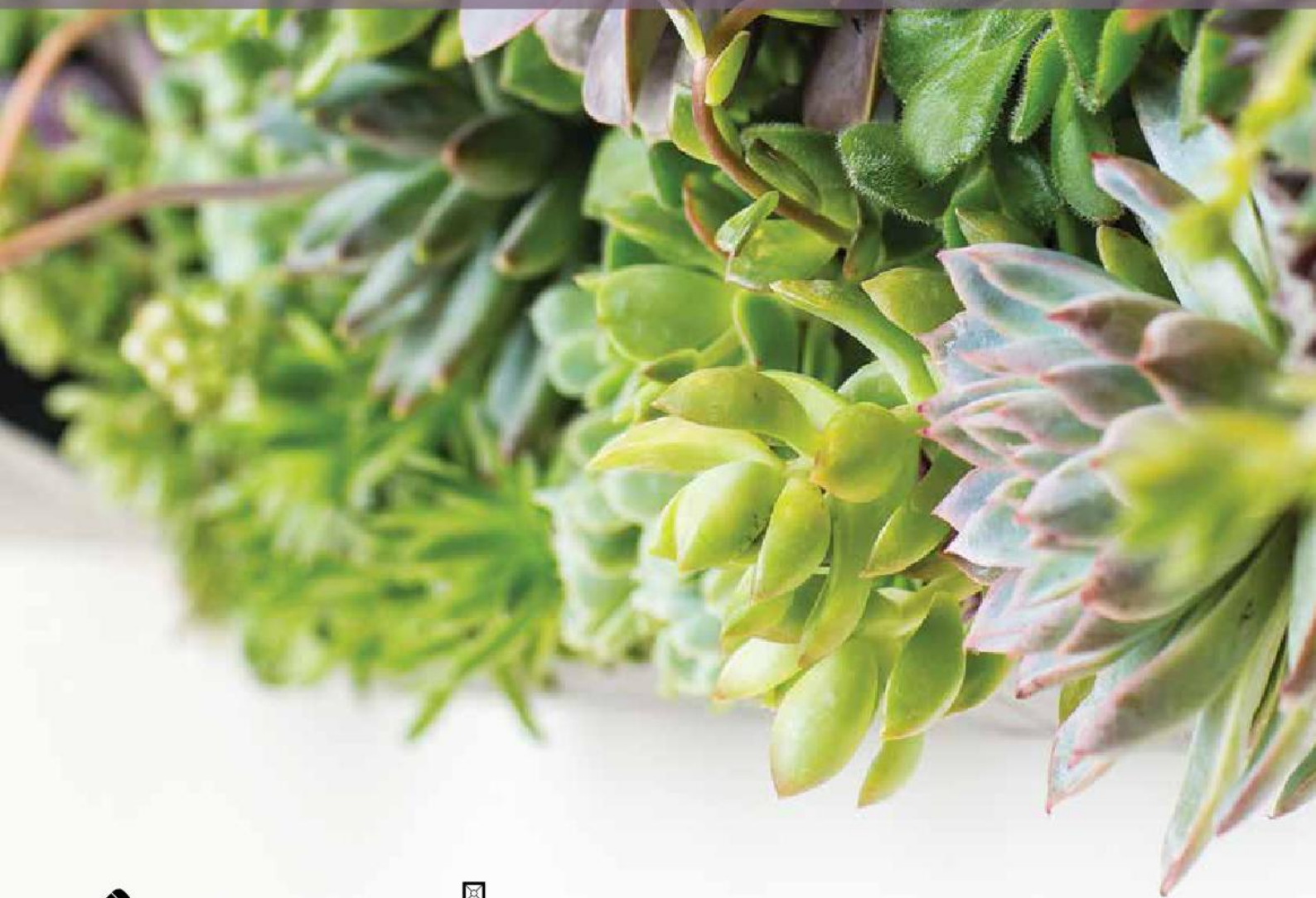


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TOUGH GUY SUCCULENTS

THE SPARKLING DIAMONDS OF THE PLANT WORLD



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



PETE LAWRENCE

Roger Valliere loves succulents and calls them “the diamonds of the desert.” While he appreciates their multifaceted beauty, he also admires their toughness and agrees they really are the cockroaches of the plant world. In a good way. Roger shares his addiction with hundreds of like-minded

enthusiasts by teaching the creation and care of a ‘living wall,’ a hanging frame, suitable for garden room wall or fence, planted with a collection of succulents in all its glory.

“Once you get hooked, you will never have enough,” says Roger, who recalls an inauspicious start to

his succulent collection. As a kid, he was given a couple sempervivum (Hen and Chicks) for weeding a neighbour’s garden. Today with 1500 different varieties of succulents in their commercial greenhouses 15 minutes from Saskatoon, Roger and his partner have one of the largest

collections in Canada. They say ‘collection’ in the same way others refer to paintings or sculpture. To them, each succulent is a work of art.

Pretty and Practical

“We just love succulents,” Roger says. “They’re easy to care for and practically 

bug free. They thrive on neglect. They are charming. After a season of long hot days and cool nights, they put on a breath-taking fall show of spectacular colour."

There's a practical side to this hardy plant. Succulents last a very long time. Cut roses will last about two weeks in the right conditions. But "a bowl of succulents will grow as long as you care for it. So there is good value and longevity in your succulent purchase," Roger explains.

"Kindness kills and some will die if there's not enough light or too much water. They're hardy and there's a part of a succulent that wants to live forever. So even when the parent plant dies after a few years, it sends out pups." Pups? "Well, chicks" Roger laughs, "The hen, the parent, will send out little



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shoots that you can pinch off and start new plants. They're begging for the pups to leave home and start spreading. They know they will die so their purpose is to send out new shoots."

Living Wall Art

"We first saw living walls in Europe about 10 years ago," explained Roger. The trick to creating a frame of succulent plantings to hang on the wall is not to overthink the placement of the plants. A one-inch chick will easily grow to be a three inch plant during the season, so leave room for spread.

There are various types of frames available. Roger's favourite is a sloped variety with slotted pockets that allows drainage without losing soil. It comes with a metal bar for

mounting and an irrigation system. Normally, rainfall will suffice, but the plants can be monitored and watered only when completely dry.

In autumn take the plants (if they are perennials like hen and chicks) out of the pockets and replant in sandy, well draining soil in the rock garden or flowerbed right up to November 1. Roger advises taking off the first six to eight inches of topsoil and replacing it with sandy soil. Make sure they have lots of snow cover for insulation. More tropical succulent varieties can be taken in to live life as houseplants for the winter.

Sempervivum are usually the first up in spring. You can pinch off the pups/chicks and use them to start a new living wall frame. Prepare the

One of many ways you can display an air succulent in your home décor.



This "air plant" doesn't need soil to survive and retrieves its moisture and nutrients through its leaves. In nature it uses its sparse roots to anchor itself to a tree, rock or some other perch. In your home it can be displayed on a shelf or in a glass terrarium.

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pockets in the frame and start the chicks right in the pocket. Frames can be populated with any succulent or plant. You'll never hear this from Roger, but there's no rule against putting petunias, marigolds or other plants in your Living Wall frame. Just don't mix them with succulents since they require much more water.

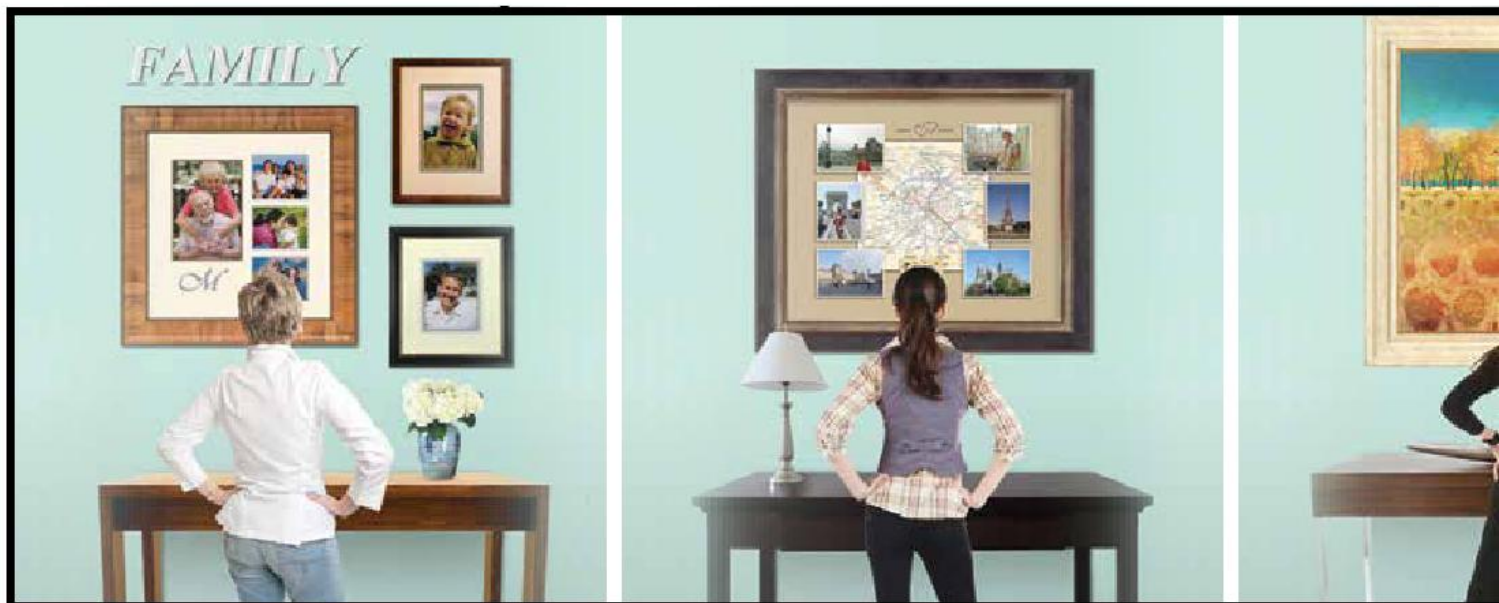
Determined to Live

"Succulents have been on Planet Earth for about six million years and they've survived in the desert in the most stringent conditions," Roger says with obvious admiration. "When they get a little rain, and in the fall when they colour up, they're like beautiful diamonds." (H)

Karin Melberg Schwier



Kalanchoe Flipping Flapjacks (or Paddle Plant)





Echeveria Lola



Euphorbia tirucalli Firesticks (or Pencil Cactus)



Sempervivum Hen & Chicks



Echeveria Perle Von Nurnberg

Photos Courtesy: Solar Gardens – The Living Art Company

ROGER'S TIPS ON CARING FOR YOUR SUCCULENTS

- Don't fuss too much!
- Use sandy well drained soil.
- Don't overwater. Biggest mistake of novice succulent growers.
- March to early September - water in small amounts when soil is dry and pot is light.
- September to late April - water more infrequently, only when soil dry and pot is light.
- Water pot in sink and let excess drain.
- Keep pots in full sun year round. They're desert lovers after all.
- Fertilize (1 round tsp. of 20-20-20 dissolved in 2 gallons of water for a 10 inch pot)
- Should a bloom attract aphids, use a systemic pesticide like EndAll (a green product).
- Did we mention don't fuss too much? Babying kills.

ROGER'S MOST POPULAR FAVOURITES:

- Sempervivum Hen & Chicks
- Echeveria Lola
- Echeveria Perle Von Nurnberg
- Kalanchoe Flipping Flapjacks (or Paddle Plant)
- Euphorbia tirucalli Firesticks (or Pencil Cactus)



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KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER

Photo Courtesy: SeasideCasual Furniture

OUTDOOR FURNITURE BEST SEAT (NOT) IN THE HOUSE

'Outdoor furniture' used to mean a wooden picnic table and two benches. All you had to worry about was slivers. Today, consumers choose from a wide variety of materials, styles, price points, and quality ranges. We asked Michael Leier, manager, SteelMet Décor, to offer our readers some advice for furnishing outdoor spaces.

"Determine the look you want first," Michael advises. "Wood? Iron? Aluminum? Recycled plastic? Rattan? You'll find lower to higher end quality,

low prices to more expensive in each. Manufacturers may use hollow tubing instead of solid components to drop the price point. Understand what you're buying."

Considerations:

Wood: Has character, but needs upkeep. May absorb water, freeze, crack, and dry out in the sun. Needs to be sealed, stained or painted annually.

Cast Iron: Wrought iron has a great handcrafted look. Durable but will rust even if painted.

Can hold the temperature and may burn.

Cast Aluminum: Can look and feel like wrought iron. Weathers well and many higher end brands are resistant to rust. Radiates heat. Good cast aluminum should be a heavier weight. Outdoor Lifestyle is one of the only companies that warranties against freeze damage.

Plastic/Resin: Cheaper plastic degrades and gets brittle in the sun and cold. Good quality plastic holds up and is heavier.

Products made to look like real wood.

Rattan: Lower end more wood-based with woven elements. Higher end cast aluminum framing with composite plastic weaving won't fade or lose colour.

High end products should last 15 – 20 years. It may be false economy to buy cheap now and have to replace it in five years. Check what bolts and connectors are made out of even if the body is rust-proof aluminum. Use

the heft test: a chair with a 15-year warranty and one with a 5-year should look and feel noticeably different.

"In Saskatchewan, good outdoor furniture ideally should withstand 50 below to 50 above," Michael says. "It has to be in the sun, rain, snow, ice, all possibly in the same day!"

Extending the life and look of lower quality furniture is possible by storing it out of the elements. Harsh sun and extreme temperatures are death knells for cheaper furniture.

Consider the cushions. Sun-proof, machine-washable covers and water and mildew resistant covers and batting are ideal. For less expensive cushions, keep out of the elements when not in use.

Whatever you choose, find out whether a warranty is held with the manufacturer or the retailer. The better the product, the better and longer the warranty (as in double-digit years, not single digit months). The retailer should happily provide a copy. Staple it to your receipt and bring it back should you ever have a problem. 

Karin Melberg Schwier



Photo Courtesy: Outdoor Lifestyle

THE SUMMER SWAT TEAM – Ideas to Keep Mosquitoes at Bay.

No matter how inviting your outdoor furniture, a diabolical winged beast can hold it all hostage. During Saskatchewan summers, mosquitoes see you as a walking buffet. To fend off the diners—and reduce West Nile risk—we asked a pharmacist and Health Canada for options:

DEET (DIETHYL-META-TOLUAMIDE):

The most effective repellent available on the Canadian market, an excellent safety record when used appropriately. Higher concentrations don't work better, but last longer. DEET 10% lasts 2-3 hours whereas DEET 30% can last up to 6. Concentrations not to exceed 30% for adults; 10% for children 6 months to 12 years old. Use 10% DEET up to 3 times daily for 2 to 12 year olds and once daily for children 6 months to 2 years old. Do not use DEET on children under 6 months old.

P-MENTHANE 3.8-DIOL:

Also known as lemon eucalyptus oil. Provides up to two hours of protection, but should not be used on children under three years of age. Apply up to 2 times a day.

SOYBEAN OIL:

A two per cent blocker repellent provides protection for 3.5 hours. No age restrictions or limitations on frequency.

CITRONELLA:

Registered products protect people for 30 minutes up to two hours. Not to be used on infants or toddlers.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE:

Avoid sunscreen/bug repellent combinations. Sunscreens should be applied more often and more liberally than insect repellents. If you need both, apply the sunscreen 20 minutes before the repellent.

OTHER UNORTHODOX SUGGESTIONS:

These aren't endorsed, but some people swear by spritzing vanilla extract on exposed skin or applying it to pulse points. Others spray on a half-and-half mix of Listerine and household vinegar, or dab on some Vick's VapoRub. Tuck Bounce dryer sheets in your pockets or waistband. Some antisocial diehards make a paste of fresh garlic to dab on skin.

PLANTS AS REPELLANTS:

Lemon Thyme, Citronella, Lavender, Basil, Catnip, Pennyroyal, Tansy, Marigolds. Place these potted plants around your yard. Crush a few leaves and rub on your skin, then sprinkle them in the area or soak in water. Spray deck and patio.

MOSQUITO PILL:

Invented in Calgary and new to Saskatoon, there is a pill that people ingest to ward off mosquitoes and other bugs called Mozi-Q. This alternative is available at Nutter's, Nature's Health Centre, and Remedies Natural Foods.

AVOID THEM:

Stay indoors during dawn and dusk. Wear long sleeved, light coloured shirts and pants. Change water often in paddling pools, dog dishes, birdbaths. Drain stagnant water. Cut grass. And swat.





BUILDING A WELL-MANNERED INFILL HOUSE

FOUR TECHNIQUES TO RESPECT
THE OLD NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARM

Older established neighbourhoods have a lot going for them. They're closer to the heart of the city, more walkable, and often more well-treed and attractive. As cities grow bigger, building in older neighbourhoods is an important step to help curb urban sprawl. But building a home in an established neighbourhood can be more costly than building in a new suburb and there are many considerations to think about in order to "fit in."

Saskatoon is currently one of the only remaining major Canadian cities without any residential infill guidelines, but that is about to change. The city has initiated a process to determine these guidelines, and Mark Bobyn, owner of Design Build Inc., is one of the people helping to shape that process.

The guidelines will not be a "be all, end all" rule book, says Bobyn, but rather a basic set of principles for designers to keep in mind. Bobyn has been exploring the best practices of building in older neighbourhoods for years, and has incorporated many of those ideas into his most recent home design at 520 Seventh Street.

1. Be a Good Neighbour

Building in an old neighbourhood is all about creating a well-mannered home. Bobyn says designers owe it to the neighbourhood to complement and even enhance what exists already through the new building's form.

In older neighbourhoods, you find design elements intended to create human interaction: porches, a number of windows on the face of the house, no garages at the front, shorter fences, and a

smaller distance between the front of the house and the sidewalk.

"The biggest complaint you hear about new construction in older neighbourhoods is the lack of consideration for how the house fits in with its neighbouring houses," says Bobyn.

Those design elements that create human interaction also have a practical purpose: surveillance.

Keep safety in mind when planning your landscape. A low fence – or a semi-transparent fence, such as the lattice fence at the Seventh Street house – will encourage incidental contact with your neighbours, and help them keep an eye on your yard when you're not around.

2. Make the Scale Look Smaller

Homes built today are bigger than they were at the beginning of the 1900s when most of the homes in Nutana and Buena Vista were built.

"Scale plays a very important role in this," Bobyn says. "Given the pressures to create larger homes, you need to be innovative in the design process to make the scale of the home look smaller."

The roof on Bobyn's two-storey house is turned so the main roof faces the street, and the roof line comes all the way down to the first floor, creating the appearance of a one-and-a-half-storey home. The house also sits lower on the lot, resulting in fewer steps between the interior and landscape.

Bobyn also suggests avoiding large, blank side walls.

"Reduce the height and width of your side walls, and break them up into several different planes. Give them more detail and function" 



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such as side entrances, windows, roof canopies, chimneys, and more interesting material details."

3. Be Smart About Square Footage

In addition to creating an illusion of a smaller house, designers can actually cut down on square footage by spending more time

considering the layout of the house.

"You can reduce a 2,000 square foot home down to 1,700 square feet, or even 1,600 square feet, and have it work just as well and feel similar," says Bobyn.

Occupying the space created by the roof of a house is one of the best ways to bring down

the size and scale without sacrificing square footage. In most newer homes, large roof trusses are set on top of the living space, creating unusable space where many traditional home designs had lofts or bedrooms.

You can also focus on making your basement space more welcoming. For example, the

house on Seventh Street has an eight-foot basement with big windows and large window wells so you can see more, and more natural light can get in.

4. Pay Attention to Detail

The Seventh Street house blends in so well with the neighbourhood, a casual observer might think it's a

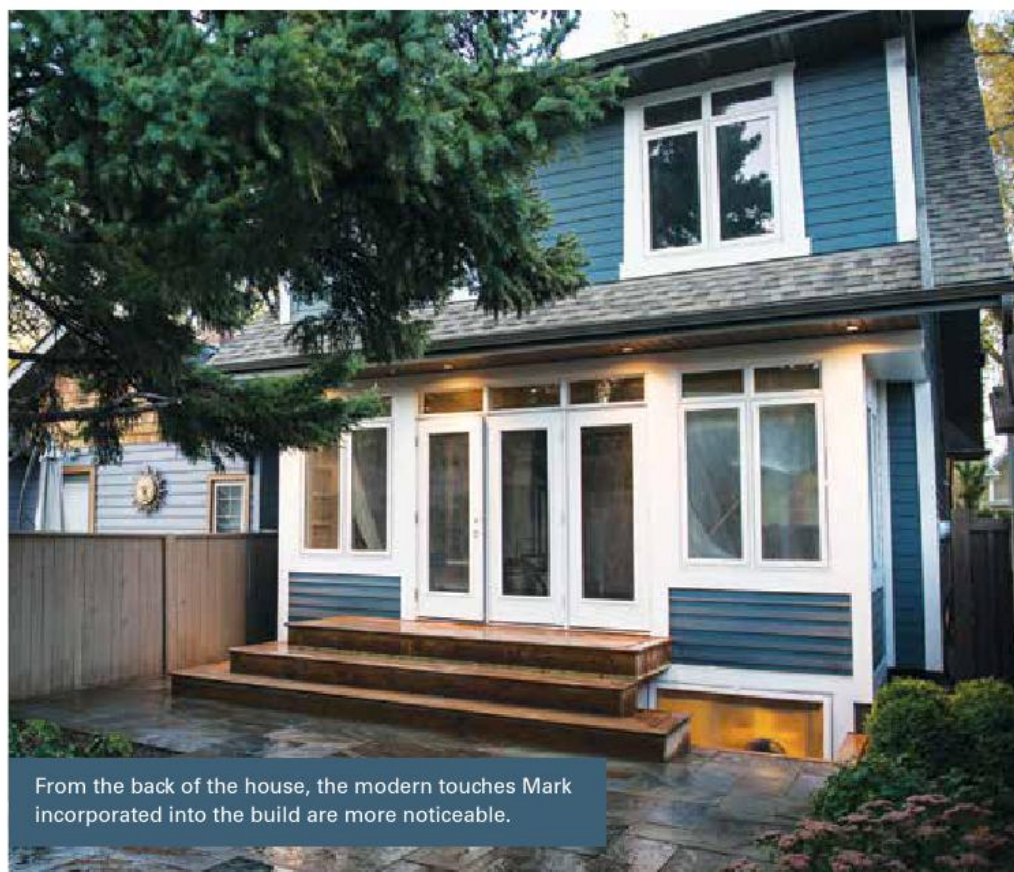
renovation. The large front windows are broken down into smaller segments, as with many of the houses on the street. The steeper roof pitch is similar in design to the houses around it.

"I didn't feel the need to replicate the exact era, but I wanted to make it feel comfortable to the era around it," Bobyn says.

Houses in these older neighbourhoods were built at a time when there was more pride in ownership. A lot of time and energy went into building those homes, and Bobyn says you shouldn't cut corners in terms of trying to fit in today.

"Take your time to create a well-mannered house," he says. "You owe it to your neighbourhood." 

Ashleigh Mattern



From the back of the house, the modern touches Mark incorporated into the build are more noticeable.

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HOW DO YOU EAT AN

CHARACTER HOME RENOVATION TIPS



ELEPHANT?



CRYSTAL ZVACEK

Photos Courtesy: Inspired Photography

The challenge sat in the room like an elephant. How to renovate a 100-year-old character home and add a two-story addition, while finding ways to maintain the home's character, reuse products and be energy efficient? One bite at a time.

Impact Construction was up to the task. Gerald Audit, President of Impact Construction and his team are experts in character homes. "Due to our experience, we knew the challenges to look out for in this character home, but every project is unique," says Gerald. "We love – I mean love – renovating and solving problems."

Impact Construction offers their top bite-size tips for renovating character homes:

Safety First

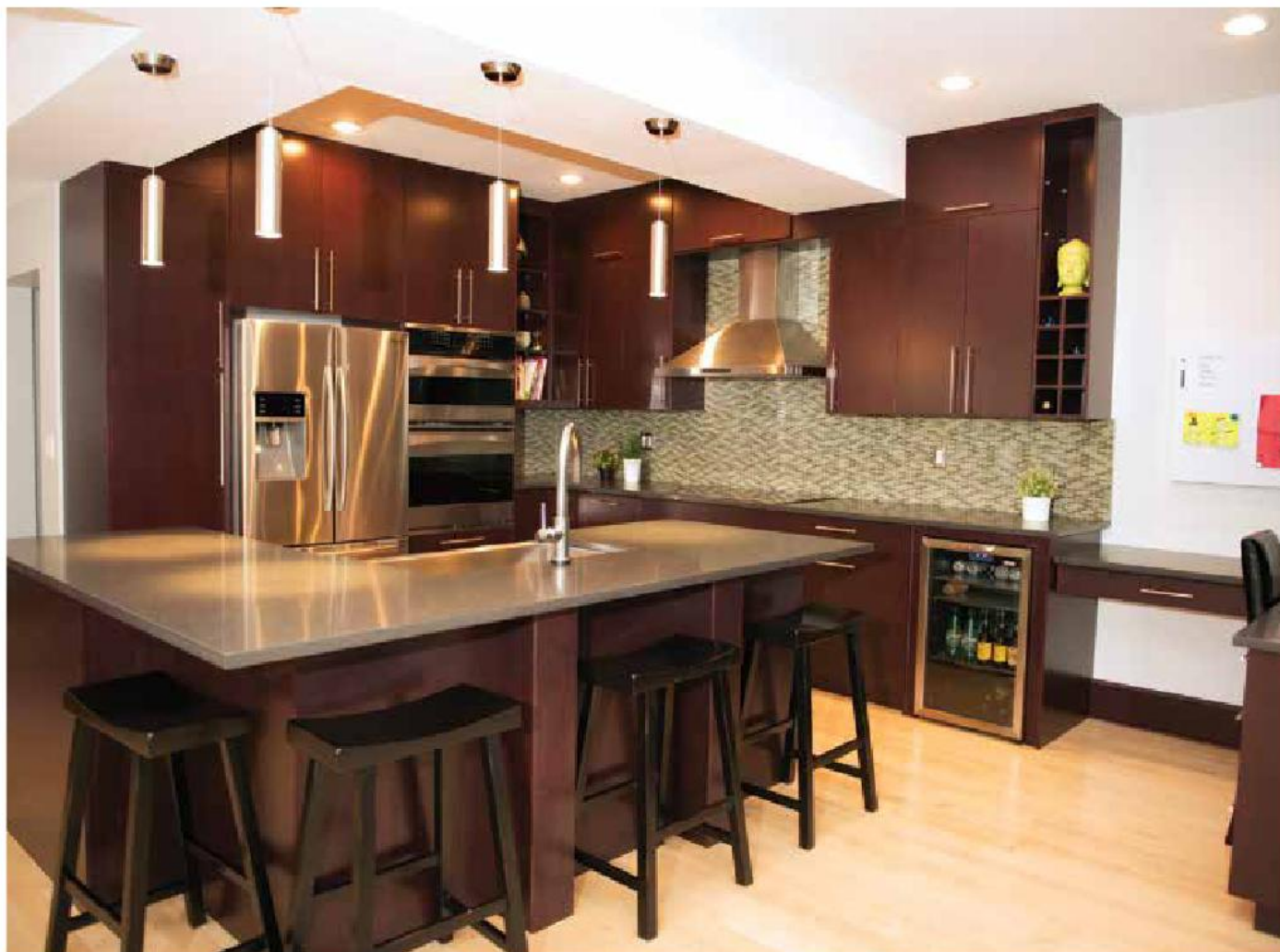
Knob and tube wiring was a standard in homes until the 1930s. Remove all knob and tube to improve safety and bring home up to code. Don't try this yourself. Ensure your contractor or electrician has experience working with this form of electrical wiring.

Refinish or Replicate

When the unique characteristics of an original door or trim speak to you - answer. If a door is in good shape, consider refinishing and reusing the door. It's an instant conversation starter. Or, as Impact Construction did, create custom trim to replicate the original.

Use Efficient Construction Techniques

Increase the energy efficiency of your home, by using double 5/8" drywall on exterior walls and 2" x 6" studs on interior walls – boosting your home's insulation and fire rating. 



Recycle Kitchen

"Sell old countertops, and cabinetry instead of seeing them fill our landfills and gain additional spending money," says Gerald. Used cabinets can be sold on online classified sites such as kijiji.ca. "Or

reuse them in a basement bar or donate to Habitat for Humanity's ReStore," recommends Gerald. Simply take your kitchen apart the same way you put it up, one screw at a time. Pieces of kitchen cabinets can also be

repurposed to be used as garage workbenches or in laundry rooms for extra storage.

Fix Any Damage First

Ensure the source of any mold or damage is repaired before finishing. The most cost-effective

time to fix a problem is before the renovation has begun.

Light for Efficiency

Use natural lighting, such as skylights and large windows to light spaces naturally. Just be sure to choose energy efficient

A woman in a green shirt is holding a large piece of insulated concrete form (ICF). To the right, two children are holding a large piece of ICF. The background is white with some green foliage at the bottom left.

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options such as triple low E windows.

Prepare for Surprises

"There are always surprises!" explains Gerald. "Budget an extra 10 to 20%. It is how a surprise is taken care of that will indicate the project's success."

ICF Technology a Good Option:

Lower energy bills. Lower maintenance. Gain a home that's healthier to live in, and easier on the environment. Too good to be true? Not so. ICF systems offer this and more. Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) technology use concrete forms that are built in the shape of the exterior of the house, reinforced with steel and filled with foam – creating a continuous layer of foam insulation.

Ensure Contractor's Experience with Similar Projects

Character homes come with their own quirks. Be sure to find a contractor with experience. Look at similar past jobs and ask for those specific references.

After following the above tips, under the critical supervision of the feline Project Manager, Wink (who stayed on the project 24-7), today this character home is a masterpiece of charm and modern convenience, lovingly completed by Impact Construction.

"Reusing products may not always work," cautions Gerald. "It largely depends on your vision and the original condition of the doors and trim, but be creative, keep an open mind and consult an expert."

So how do you renovate a character home? One bite at a time. 

Crystal Zvacek





JUICY FRUIT

URBAN ORCHARDS BRING ON SWEET HARVEST



Karin Melberg Schwier

Photo Courtesy: Teresa Soulo dre

Saskatchewan's hot, dry summers and harsh bone-chilling winters are not the sort of conditions favoured by the kinds of fruit trees, vines and shrubs that happily dot the Okanagan or Niagara Fruit Belt landscape. But years of breeding by the University of Saskatchewan's Fruit Program have produced hardy prairie varieties. Even a novice grower with a bit of backyard dirt and a little know-how can produce impressive homegrown fruit.

Get in the Zone

Saskatoon is rated Zone 2b. It's not a strict rule, and borderline plants designed for

slightly warmer zones may do fine depending on your location in the city.

Care and Feeding

Survey your planting area for lots of sunlight and avoid shade from big trees or fences. Fruit trees like lots of space, so think good thoughts about a tree's potential and give it room. In some cases, you'll need two plants for pollination and fruit set. They don't need to be side by side as long as they're relatively close. Well-drained sandy loam is the best bed, but even typical city clay seems to support good growth. Most trees should be planted

when dormant, either spring or fall, and watered for the first couple of years to establish the root system. Don't water or fertilize in the late summer or fall since that may interfere with hardening off process.

Take Your Pick

These cultivars are recommended for the Saskatoon area (some developed by U of S), all were bred in Zone 2b; most successfully tested in zone 2A.

Plums: Patterson Pride (U of S), Pembina, Brookred, and Perfection/Superb. Two are required for cross-pollination; usually wild plums are used.

Plant about 7-13 feet apart from other plums or other trees. Fruit 3-5 years after planting and ripens in late August/early September.

Grapes: Valiant (fresh eating) and Beta (juice and jellies). Frontenac, Marquette and Minnesota type wine grapes may survive within the city; likely need special protection. Lay vines on ground for winter, cover with mulch. Need well drained soil. Don't over-fertilize or overwater. Plant to allow for trellising, 6-8 feet apart. Lots of sun, south exposure is ideal. Self-fertile so only one plant is required. Fruit 2-3 years

after planting and ripens in late September.

Strawberries: June Bearers: Cavendish, Kent. Everbearers: Ogallalla, Fort Laramie. Dayneutrals: Tristar, Seascape, Fern. Dayneutrals need to be covered with leaf mulch or straw for winter. Plant at crown level; too deep or too shallow won't survive. Can be planted in matted rows, runners encouraged, for perennial or plastic mulch for annual planting. Fruit ripens July to freeze-up depending on the cultivar.

Saskatoons: Northline, Smoky, Honeywood, Parkhill, Thiessen, Martin, Nelson. Very hardy and drought resistant. Can grow in a variety of soil types. Plant about 3 feet apart. Properly pruned plants will produce for over 30 years. Fruit in about 3-5 years, ripens in mid-July

Raspberries: Boyne, Red Mammoth (U of S), Steadfast (U of S), yellow fruit Honeyqueen. Plant early spring 3 feet between plants, 5-6 inches deep; water well immediately after planting. Remove dead canes in spring. Fruit ripens late August, early September.

Dwarf Sour Cherries: Valentine, Juliet Carmine Jewel, Cupid (all U of S). Crimson Passion and Romeo also good varieties. Best grown in sheltered locations and as bushes. Allow to sucker slightly and form 5 to 10 trunks. Plant 1-2 inches deeper than they were in nursery container, about 5-7 feet apart. Water immediately. Not much fertilizer required. Self-fertile. Fruit in 3-5 years, ripens mid-August. 🐜



Apples

Photos Courtesy: U of S Fruit Program



Raspberries



Pears



Jennifer Arcand Slater
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Haskap: Tundra, Indigo Gem, Borealis, Honeybee (all U of S), Aurora (U of S 2013/2014 release), Berry Blue. Extremely hardy, tolerates most conditions except standing water. Plant 3 feet apart as deep as original nursery plug. Fertilizer usually not necessary. Water frequently until established. Flowers May, fruit ready early July. Two unrelated plants needed to pollenate.

Pears: Thomas, John, Ure, Early Gold. Golden Spice a good pollinizer plant but is not usually ripe until October. Plant trees about 20-23 feet apart, two for pollination. Fruit ripens in September.

Apples: Crabapples: Rescue, Dolgo, Kerr. Apples: Norland, Fall Red, Norkent, Goodland, Battleford, Carlos Queen, Westland, Haralson, Prairie

Sensation (U of S). Two for pollination; usually enough nearby crabapple or other apples in city. Fruit ripens late August to October, depending on the cultivar.

More information for Saskatoon Fruit Enthusiasts:

- U of S Fruit Program Haskap Day July 19, 2013
- Apple/Grape Day September 5, 2013
- Horticultural Field Lab: 2909 14th Street
- Website: www.fruit.usask.ca
- Questions are also welcome at gardenline@usask.ca



Karin Melberg Schwier



Haskap

Photo Courtesy: U of S Fruit Program



Grapes

Photo Courtesy: Teresa Souloandre

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Ellen Sawchuk, Research Technician with the U of S Fruit Program, talks with Brenda Loughheed at the recent Gardenscape about choices for her city garden.

Photo Courtesy: Karin Melberg Schweir



Plums

Photo Courtesy: U of S Fruit Program



Saskatoon Berries

Photo Courtesy: U of S Fruit Program



Cherries



Strawberries

Photo Courtesy: U of S Fruit Program

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DOLLARS AND CENTS ON GREEN

TOP FIVE WAYS TO BE GREEN AND EARN AN ROI



JULIE BARNES

Photo: Ronn Lepage

When Gwen and Ronn Lepage traded their modern Broadway townhouse for a beautiful new home in the river valley at Sarilia Country Estates, they had the perfect opportunity to capitalize on Ronn's expertise in "Smart Green" building technology.

With a master's degree in environmental strategy focusing

on residential construction, Ronn and his company, VerEco Homes, had already designed a net-zero home exhibit at the Western Development Museum in 2010 and 2011.

Ronn's thesis explored why people weren't building green homes. "One of the barriers was that nobody really knew how to do it," he says. "We

started VerEco to help people who want to build a green home, or do a retrofit."

The teachings from his master's degree, combined with his 31 years with Deloitte, Canada's largest chartered accounting firm, enable Ronn to provide advice that balances both the environmental and economic factors involved

in making good decisions on green technology.

"When we started talking to people about building green homes, their idea was that you just build a normal house, include a geothermal system, and cover it in solar panels. But that's a very expensive way to do it," says Ronn. He adds that there are smarter ways

to be green and earn a return on your investment when you make your decisions armed with the right information.

Based on Ronn's net present value (NPV) calculations (see sidebar for details), the following five technologies have provided the greatest return on investment in the Lepages' new green home.

1. Energy Monitoring System

"We've found that the biggest thing you can do is start monitoring your energy use," says Ronn. The Lepages use a system called TED (The Energy Detective) 5000. It hooks up to their electrical panel and they can view their usage levels on any computer from anywhere in the world. Installation is a snap, but it should be left to an electrician. They purchased

the system from Rock Paper Sun in Saskatoon. It's also available for purchase at theenergydetective.com.

The monitoring system cost around \$300 and the Lepages estimate they will save around 400 kilowatt hours per year because of the awareness that comes with understanding how energy is used in their home. Gwen says, "Once you know where you stand, you can make an adjustment. You can look at it and ask yourself what could we do to get that lower?"

2. Phantom Energy Management

Electricity used to power electronics while they are turned off is known as phantom power. The only way to cut this energy loss is to unplug each device when it's not in use. The Lepages had phantom energy circuits

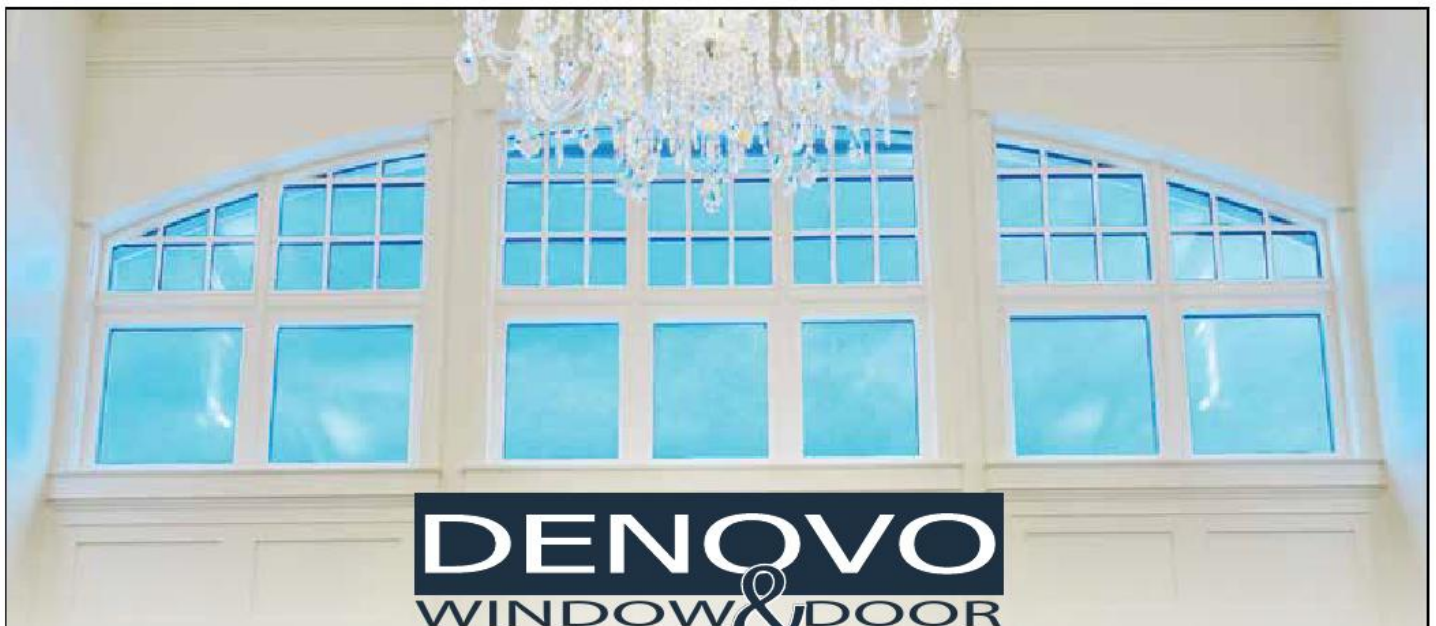


Screen shot of TED monitoring system showing energy graphing over a specific time frame.

installed in their home, so turning off phantom power is as easy as a flick of a switch. "To go around unplugging everything, I just wouldn't do it. So we've got a switch on every floor," says Ronn.

It is not as easy to install phantom energy circuits in an

existing home as it would be to plan for in a new build, but there is a way to cut down on phantom power: a power bar with an on/off switch. Costing roughly \$40 each, they are a great investment considering that phantom power in our province is responsible



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Screen shot of TED monitoring system that can aid in the analysis of your home's energy output.

for about four per cent of a home's electricity consumption which equals over 300 kilowatt hours per year.

3. Upgrade Insulation

Our long, cold winters mean that the best way to reduce energy use is proper insulation. A super-insulated house can reduce heating costs by two-thirds or more. In some homes, that equates to savings of \$600 to \$800 per year in natural gas and much more in homes heated by electricity.

In an existing house, the attic is relatively easy; it's the exterior walls that can be difficult.

"I've talked to a few people who have redone their insulation by adding to the interior of their walls. It's really expensive," says Ronn. "You're moving heat registers from the walls because you're making the wall thicker. That's a really big reno." Ronn studied how insulation was upgraded in Saskatchewan and eventually flew to Germany to see how it was done there. "They add insulation to the outside. It makes a lot of sense."

This discovery prompted VerEco to create a system called xWRAP. It involves stripping the exterior of the

house and wrapping it in a blanket of polystyrene foam up to a foot thick. The siding or stucco is then attached. The Lepages have eight inches of this insulation on the outside of their home making it very energy efficient. Ronn notes that the right amount of insulation for your home depends on a variety of factors. "Each home is very specific in terms of energy savings from additional insulation."

4. Reduce Hot Water Consumption

The savings multiply when homeowners reduce their hot water consumption. This is because it not only saves water; it saves the cost of heating that water. Ronn says the first order of business is installing low-flow shower heads. "About 50 per cent of the hot water used is in your showers. A typical house would have a 9.6 litre per minute shower. Ours is 4.6 litres per minute. So you're saving that much energy and water every time you shower." Additional savings can be found by adding aerators to kitchen and bathroom faucets.

If you've ever experienced a drippy low-flow shower head at a hotel, don't think they are all created equal. The Lepages'

NET PRESENT VALUE

Ronn uses a business tool called Net Present Value (NPV) to determine whether or not to use a particular green technology in a home. Often, when deciding whether to buy green, consumers simply look at the cost. Ronn considers the purchase of green technologies to be an investment. NPV compares the value of a dollar today with the value of that same dollar in the future, taking inflation and the time value of money into account. If the NPV of the investment in a green technology is positive, it should be accepted. However, if NPV is negative, the owner would be smarter to invest in a different green technology.

NPV CONSIDERS FOUR IMPORTANT FACTORS:

1. How much am I investing in the technology?

How much does the technology cost? Some technologies are very inexpensive while others are more expensive.

2. How long is the technology going to last?

In other words, what is the life of the technology? This is usually easy to estimate.

3. How much am I going to save?

Although we know how much we'll save today with a particular technology, we have to consider that energy costs will only increase over time. Ronn assumes a 6.25 percent increase in energy costs in his equation. Forecasts on energy costs vary and tend to range anywhere between 4 to 10 percent.

4. What is the cost of money?

If someone gave you \$100 ten years from now, it's not going to be worth as much as \$100 today. That's why the NPV calculation includes the cost of money. In accounting this is called the discount rate, and Ronn uses the current mortgage rate as the amount you pay when you buy a house.

shower heads add air to the water so you feel the same pressure as you would in a regular shower. Translation: you'll be able to easily rinse out that shampoo.

5. LED Lighting

Since a lot of energy goes into lighting, switching to LEDs is a smart choice. "We've got LEDs throughout and it's just amazing," says Ronn. "It's very natural light. Even at night, it's almost like daylight in here."

Their indoor and outdoors bulbs are 12 and three watts respectively. If the outdoor lights are left on all night, the impact isn't even noticeable. The bulbs cost about \$35 each, but Ronn says, "they last 50,000 hours so you never have to worry about changing them." Each LED bulb will save up to \$200 over the life of the bulb. 

Julie Barnes

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TAMMY ROBERT



PETE LAWRENCE

Whether an avid golfer or a hacker like the rest of us, who wouldn't love to live on a golf course? You could just walk out your back door anytime to practice your chipping and putting.

Regardless of your skill set or where you live, you can have

a taste of golf course living by creating a small golf course hole, complete with a putting green, right in your backyard.

Mark Nowakowsk of Saskatoon PerfectTurf has been a key player in introducing this new trend to local homeowners.

"A personal backyard putting-

green is nothing like what you'd expect to see at a mini-golf course," explains Mark. "Our synthetic putting greens have the true ball bounce and rolling features of a natural bent grass green. We use the highest quality putting green turf on the market."

Backyard putting green styles, shapes and sizes can vary as wildly as your backstroke.

"We've installed a range of backyard greens, often something as simple as a small corner of the property where the homeowner just 



HAVE A BACKYARD PUTTING-GREEN, OR THINKING OF INSTALLING ONE?

Brennen Gee, Head Golf Pro at The Willows Golf and Country Club, has some advice for you:

- **"No golfer can practice enough. Practice, practice, practice!"**
- **"It's all about working on the fundamentals. For putting, that means a grip and stance setup that's square to the target line and ensuring you're developing the appropriate putting stroke for your game."**
- **"Golfers who want to excel can improve their short game by working on putting and chipping."**
- **"You still have to play. Make sure to take your game regularly to the golf course."**

wants to practice their putting stroke in peace and privacy," says Mark. "On the other end of the spectrum, we've worked with homeowners to create private greens that are really elaborate, complete with sand traps, Japanese Zen gardens and waterfalls.

"You can get really artistic. It all depends on what you want: functionality, bold design, or both. Regardless, it always ends up a statement piece on any landscape."

Designing a golf green is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for most of us, so relish the opportunity. "You get to

decide the shape, number of and location of the holes, and the beautiful contours of the green," continues Mark. "Take it a step further by adding a fringe or a chipping area and you have the ultimate backyard short game experience."

Expect your turf installation partner to work closely with you in designing your green. From elevation changes and undulations to breaks and rolls and hole locations – everything you would do during the design of a major golf course – you'll have the chance to do in your backyard. 



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Great landscaping will ensure that your home golf green looks as though it has been in your backyard all along.

As in anything worthwhile, there are challenges to consider when contemplating a backyard putting green. If you have a walkout basement, those elevation changes might present a problem, though none that can't be creatively overcome. If your yard has lots of trees or a complicated root system, the installation could become a delicate process in order to avoid damaging the existing eco-systems and foliage.

Does it add value to your



property? Mark says a backyard putting green is a no-brainer. "There's no need to mow, water or fertilize your synthetic turf green, and it's pet friendly, so there's no worrying about those costs as you would for a natural lawn," he explains.

"Like a beautiful deck or an interlocking brick driveway, a backyard putting green is an investment which gets passed along from homeowner to homeowner." 

Tammy Robert

A special thank you to Paula and her models at MASALA Talent for her assistance with this photo shoot.



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Ryan and Pam Jansen and their daughter Alexa in front of their solar panels.



ASHLEIGH MATTERN



PETE LAWRENCE

Ryan and Pam Jansen's house looks like many new builds: it still has that pristine look, and there are no trees in the yard. But this net zero home is far from ordinary.

The first difference is the large stand of solar panels in their yard. The solar panels are currently the overwhelming feature on their acreage. But it's easy to imagine that with a more developed yard, the panels will be as innocuous as a large shed.

Other differences are below the surface. This isn't living "off the grid." Their electrical system is tied to SaskPower, and they don't have to do anything special to live in their home.

"We wanted to prove that you could do net zero without sacrificing and living a very different lifestyle," said Pam. "We wanted to prove you could actually live normally."

Their system uses an 8.19 kilowatt array, and generates about 12,500 kilowatt hours per year, which is about how much energy their house uses. They're also in the process of testing a solar tracker Ryan designed, programmed, and built that follows the sun to maximize energy generation. With the addition of the tracker, they predict they should create 17,500 kilowatt hours per year.

The Jansens also employ features like passive solar design. The house includes lots of south-facing windows, concrete floors that absorb the heat and re-radiate it into the house, very good insulation, and an open concept style so warmth can circulate.

Solar Energy: Who is it Good For?

Ryan says that when deciding whether to use 

solar energy, the first step should be to create an energy efficient home in every other way possible.

"First of all, any energy that you can take off and not ever need to use, then you don't need to generate," he said. "If your goal is just to offset some of your energy use, usually the most bang for your buck is just turning off lights. So do that stuff first, but after you've done those things, solar is a good way to offset."

Solar is increasingly becoming an affordable option. The Jansens installed their system in 2011, and the cost has already dropped by about 40 per cent. Plus, SaskPower has a 20 per cent rebate for residents who install solar power.

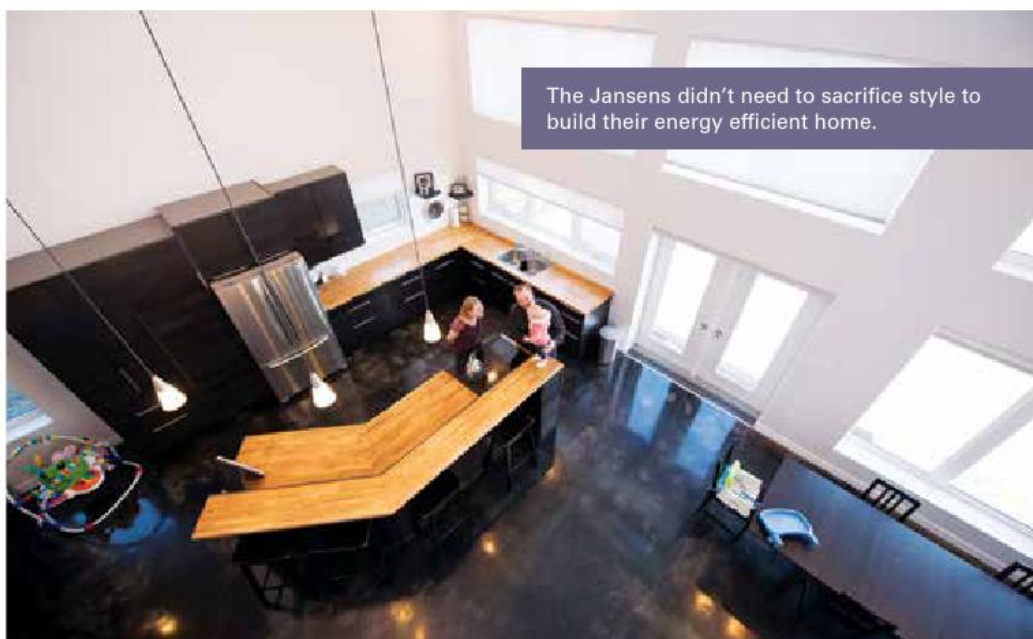
"It can be a financially sound decision," said Pam. "Your idea of being great to the environment aside, it can be a financial investment as opposed to being something for the environment only."

A system costs about \$5 per watt to install, so a six kilowatt system costs about \$30,000, with a payback period of about 12 years. But that's assuming a fixed price on electricity. Unlike

Lots of south-facing windows help the Jansens to heat their home with passive solar design.



The Jansens didn't need to sacrifice style to build their energy efficient home.





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most SaskPower clients, the Jansens are happy to hear about rate increases because those increases are shrinking their payback time.

The future of solar energy is looking bright. The City of Saskatoon is working on creating a solar energy plan, and the Saskatoon and Region Home Builders' Association is working towards educating city planners, architects, engineers,

builders, and designers about how to build communities and homes that are solar ready from the start.

"Renewable energy is now for the masses," said Ryan. "It used to be for hippies and tree huggers, or people with excess money, and now it's come to a cost where it is more accessible." 

Ashleigh Mattern

Is Solar Energy Right For You?

Ryan Jansen, owner of solar installation company Good Steward Solutions, shares his tips.

New House Build

A custom build with passive solar design and other energy saving measures is the best set-up for solar energy: less energy will be needed to power your home, and all options can be explored. Another option is to make your home solar ready, so you'll be ready when the solar revolution comes.

Acreage

Jansen says solar energy makes the most sense on acreages where there's less interference from neighbours, so you don't have to worry about things like a neighbour's tree blocking the sunlight. And there's enough space to set up your panels on the ground, allowing for a solar tracker.

City Living

Setting up a solar array in the city can be tricky, but it's doable. Having a home with southern exposure is the most important determinant for a successful solar set up. An open backyard with no trees may also work, as long as your neighbour isn't blocking the light you need.

Retrofitting

If you've maxed out your energy efficiency options, solar is the next step. To retrofit a house in the city, the roof of the home needs to either face south, or the peak needs to run north-south, with the sides facing east-west. And no trees or buildings can be blocking the sunlight.

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SASK
IMPORT

WHO'S COMING TO SASKATOON?



ASHLEIGH MATTERN

Photo Courtesy: Scott Prokop

SASKATOON WELCOMES NEW NEIGHBOURS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

There's no denying that Saskatoon is a boomtown. The City of Saskatoon expects the population to reach nearly 400,000 in the next 20 years. Fifteen new neighbourhoods and 60,000 new homes will need to be built to meet that demand.

And Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison says he thinks the city will end up growing at a rate even faster than that.

"One of the things I think people don't realize is that

Saskatoon is the same size that Calgary was 45 years ago," he said. "Calgary now is 1.1 to 1.6 million people, depending on who you talk to, and our growth rate is faster than theirs."

The thought of Saskatoon someday becoming a city the size of Calgary is exciting, but it also comes with a warning: don't make the same poor planning decisions that lead to problems like urban sprawl.

So far, it looks like Saskatoon

is headed in the right direction. There are currently plans to develop the North Downtown area to create housing for 10,000 people, and Atchison says all of the city's plans for growth are carefully considered.

"We don't have spontaneous growth here," he said. "We have well thought out, planned growth."

Who's Coming to Saskatoon?

There has been an undeniable shift in the demographics of

the people moving to Bridge City. Atchison knows of people coming from the Philippines, Korea, Ireland, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, just to name a few places.

"It used to just be rural Saskatchewan moving to Saskatoon," he said. "We're past that. We have people from all over Canada coming, and from the United States that are coming to live here."

The City of Saskatoon prints certain 

A CULTURAL MOSAIC

Jason Yochim, Executive Officer with Saskatoon Region Association of REALTORS® shares his perspective on who he feels is moving to Saskatoon.

- Yochim estimates that about half of new immigrants are coming from Asia.
- In particular, he sees many people moving to Saskatoon from Afghanistan, Iraq, India, the Philippines, and Pakistan.
- He also sees a growing trend is the number of newcomers from China. "These individuals are very active not only in the purchase of residential real estate, but also are responsible for the drastic increase in the value of farmland," said Yochim.
- He estimates that immigrants from the United States make up about five to 10 per cent of our newcomers.
- Yochim says the number of immigrants from Africa is also on the rise, making up around 20 per cent of newcomers, with about half of that group from Sudan.

This image demonstrates a reality of Saskatoon not too long ago with our people being exported in vast numbers. How the times have changed. The shirts seen in this photo are from Saskie Shop (www.saskieshop.com).



Photo Courtesy: Scott Prokop

information in 18 languages, and the counter staff at City Hall are able to communicate in as many languages through the use of a translator service.

Atchison says the people who are moving here have wide and varied backgrounds, from doctors to educators to tradespeople to artists, but they all have one thing in common: they want to succeed.

"People that want to live here are moving here to be successful. Most people want to move to where they have an opportunity to succeed, and I admire those people that move here from all over the world, that are leaving their countries behind, their families behind, coming to a different culture."

Creating Community

Robin Purcell, corporate housing manager for Obasa Suites, is in the unique position of being one of the first people to greet these new Saskatonians.

Obasa Suites is a corporate housing company, taking care of guests for long-term stays. Clients might be staying in the city temporarily for work, for an extended period due to insurance claims or moving to Saskatoon and looking for a home.

Purcell says more and more of their clients are coming from outside of Canada, with guests moving to Saskatoon from China, Australia, India, and the U.K. Part of Obasa's mandate

is to make things easy for their clients because they understand how stressful moving can be, especially when moving from a different country.

"Saskatoon is growing, and it's good to be able to offer our clients something like this to ease them into our nice cold winters," she said.

A Smart City

Creating a city that attracts people and encourages them to stay is an important part of the City of Saskatoon's plan for growth.

One new initiative the city is taking is developing parks from the beginning, so people moving into new neighbourhoods don't have

to wait for a beautiful green space. There's also a strong focus on attainable housing, so no one is left out of the economic boom.

The City of Saskatoon is aware of the challenges of managing a growing population, and Atchison says they're working closely with the housing industry to ensure smart growth.

"What we're looking here to do is to have a 21st Century city, a smart city."

New Saskatoon Neighbourhoods

The equivalent of 15 new neighbourhoods are needed to meet Saskatoon's growth over the next 20 years. Here is a guide to a few of the newest Saskatoon neighbourhoods:

Evergreen

- Currently under construction.
- Located within the University Heights Suburban

Development Area, with the Saskatoon Forestry Farm to the west.

- Named for the 50-year-old Scots Pines that were incorporated into the layout of the neighbourhood.

Rosewood

- Currently under construction.
- Located adjacent to Highway

16 with access off Taylor street.

- Included in the neighbourhood is 65 acres of wetland and green space, natural trails and conservation areas.

Kensington

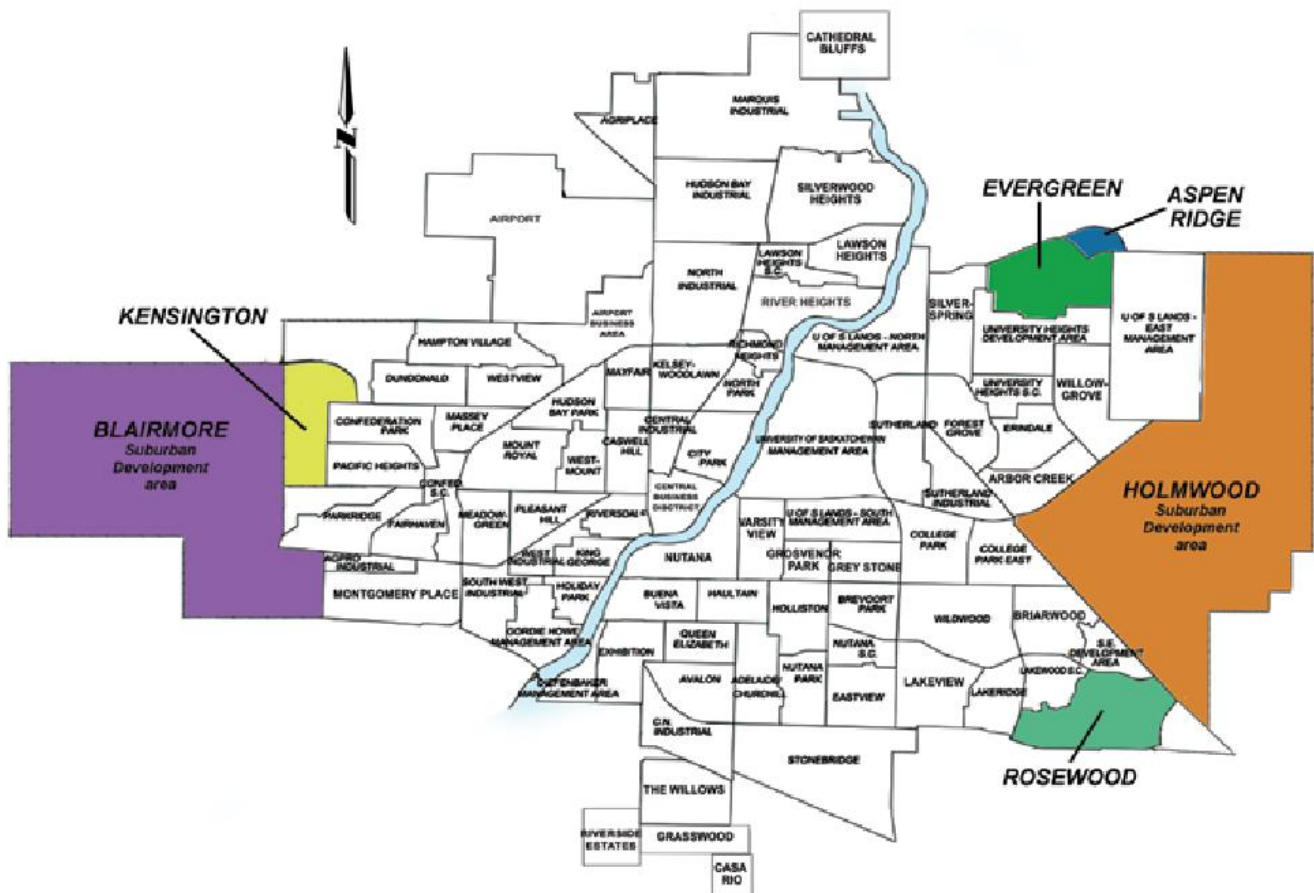
- Construction of homes to begin this year.
- Located in the Blairmore Suburban Development Area,

west of Confederation Park

- Will feature a village centre as a focal point of the neighbourhood.

Aspen Ridge

- Servicing of the neighbourhood will start in 2014.
- Located within the University Heights Suburban Development Area, 



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bounded to the south by Evergreen.

- Will feature a high-density design.

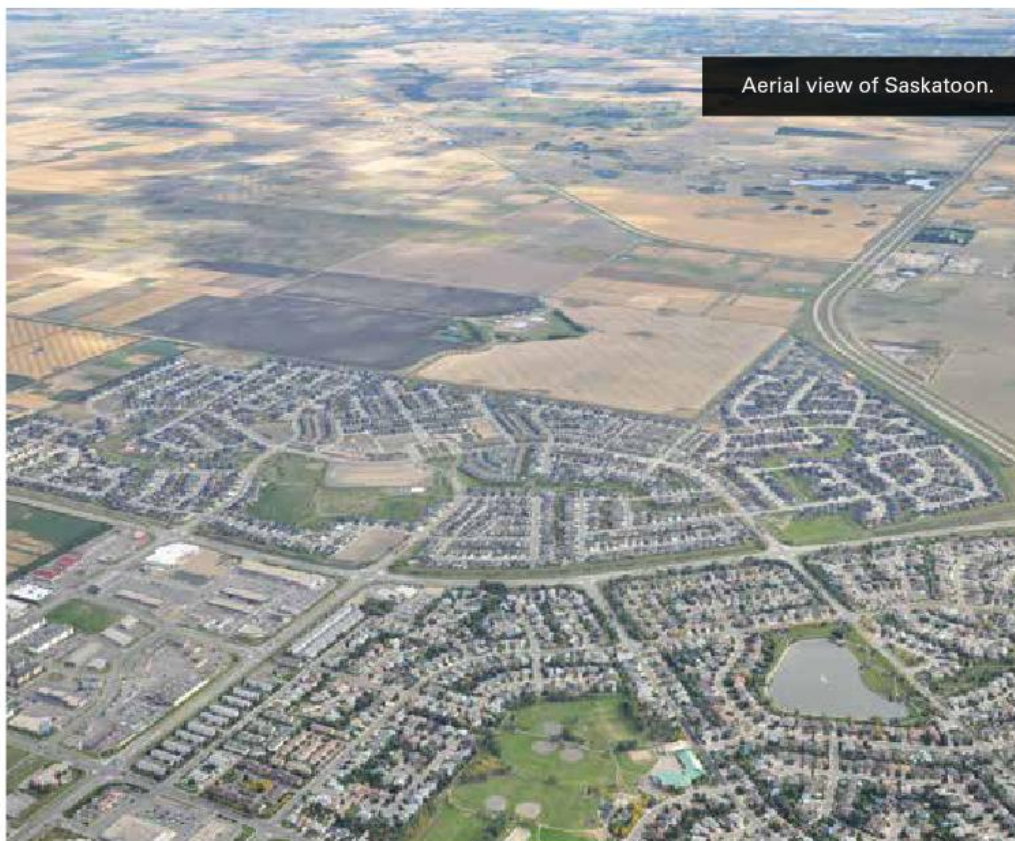
Holmwood Suburban Development Area

- Construction of homes in the first neighbourhood will start in 2014.
- Located on the east side of the city next to the University Heights Suburban Development Area.
- Will include five new neighbourhoods.
- The newest development area since the addition of Blairmore.

To be announced

- Six additional neighbourhoods are planned for the Blairmore Suburban Development Area. 

Ashleigh Mattern



Aerial view of Saskatoon.

Photo Courtesy: City of Saskatoon



EVERGREEN

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Take a stroll through Evergreen, Saskatoon's newest neighbourhood, where two rows of 50-year-old Scots Pines wait to welcome you!

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The rendering above is conceptual and intended for illustrative purposes only. It may not represent the actual resulting built form.


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CITY GARDENING ONE PLOT, ONE SHARED BACKYARD



AT A TIME



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER

In the modern urban landscape, larger homes, double-detached garages, decks with stone patios, outdoor barbeques and entertainment areas are all amenities destined to add value to property, but all eat up a valuable resource: the land. Those who want to grow their own food in the inner and outer city have to get resourceful.

Rich prairie dirt worked hard through millennia to become rich topsoil, and as downtown pavement slams shut on the earth and subdivisions chew their way across the landscape, the potential harvest must be reaped in other ways. City dwellers with itchy green thumbs and a yearning for DIY chlorophyll on their tongues are turning to creative ways to get back to the soil. There are rewards to be reaped from a little horticulture know-how and the camaraderie of new neighbourhood friends may be a bonus.

That Sense of Community

The City of Saskatoon boasts nearly two dozen community gardens, communal collections of plots set aside in open areas, divided and doled out to local residents for a small fee. Maintenance, watering, composting and tending generally falls to a committee and individual plots are the responsibility of each gardener. Seven more gardens are proposed; there are often waiting lists of up to 30 people waiting for a chance to dig in the dirt.

Gordon Androsoff is the Community Gardens Coordinator with CHEP, a network organization seen as the 'go to' source on all things community garden.

"We're a good starting

point," says Gord. "As of 2012, we facilitate and support 22 community gardens and a few other private spaces at schools and churches. We help get people started with resources like tools, seeds, transplants, someone to work through the admin details. We help to the extent we're invited."

Often a community garden will operate by committee and may have a garden expert in their midst. CHEP offers a template, but the committee adapts it and decides who fills what role, and determines guidelines and fees. Implied in the concept of community is co-operation so successful gardens operate on good will.

At work bees, many hands make light work, and since gardens are all chemical-free, keeping nasties like the dreaded potato beetle at bay means everyone needs to be vigilant. Garden politics can heat up if only a few do all the chores (à la Little Red Hen).

Some garden groups have pre-season events, a registration night potluck, a clean up before planting and after harvest. Some have winter social functions, maybe an educational session. Gord at CHEP would like to see more year round opportunities. Composting, one continual chore, is something very few gardens have the capacity for and it takes ongoing processing. The City offers compost from their depots. "That's a nice concession," says Gord. "Compost is a very valuable resource and the cost of purchasing it from landscaping companies is quite high."

City Councilor Charlie Clark says community gardens have proven to be a "remarkable way of getting people





Interactive gardening: Audrey Kinzel, a registered doctoral psychologist, lives near the Nutana community garden. "What I like most about the garden is the interaction I get with other gardeners who so willingly share their knowledge of gardening and growing hints. The work bees are another fun way to work together on a common task."

out of their living rooms and into relationship with their neighbours."

Charlie points to the Westmount community garden, which includes new immigrants and First Nations families sharing their produce and working together to tend to the site. The Eastview garden brings seniors together with schoolchildren and closed that generational gap that can so often develop within a city. The Nutana garden is the meeting place for condos residents and those living in houses, two communities that haven't always had a sense of affinity.

Gord Androsoff agrees that mingling of gardening cultures creates rich relationships. The average community garden plot is about 10 feet by 12 or 15 and may not seem like a lot of ground. But six to eight tomato plants can yield an impressive harvest and creates all sorts of connections with neighbours.

Sandra Nourse is a community gardener who tends her plot at College Park

Accessible Community Garden.

"I find that it's a really wonderful way to interact with people in my neighbourhood who I wouldn't otherwise have had a chance to meet and work with," says Sandra. "Last year I experimented with square-foot gardening, and was very pleased with the reduction of weeds, and larger amount of food that I was able to harvest from my plot."

"The genius of them is that the rewards and the benefits of the gardens are organized and produced by the gardeners themselves," Charlie adds, "which creates a tremendous sense of purpose, and renewed pride about that park or green space that they transform."

Mi Casa (Backyard) es Su Casa (Backyard)

There's another significant bit of green space in Saskatoon. A bird's eye view of the city confirms that of all the land available to grow food, the bulk of it is in people's back yards. CHEP sees that potential and has big dreams for their

COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE CITY

- City Allotment Gardens
- City Park Garden
- Railside Community Garden
- Charlottetown Community Garden
- Westmount/Leif Erikson Community Garden
- University Community Garden
- Nutana Community Garden
- Eastview Garden
- King George/Riversdale
- St. Martin's United Church Garden
- St. Matthew's Anglican Church
- Varsity View Garden
- Caswell Hill
- Aden Bowman High School
- Emmanuel Community Garden
- Sherbrooke Community Centre – Hertzberg Park
- John Dolan School
- Good Earth Community Garden – Fred Mendel Park
- Fairhaven – HS Sears Park
- Erindale/Arbor Creek Community Garden
- North Park Richmond Heights Garden
- Confederation Park School

INTERESTED? WHERE TO START:

1. Contact CHEP for advice and support (www.chep.org).
2. Start a gardening group/collective with interest and commitment.
3. Locate available land.
4. Available water source.
5. Soil and sun exposure conducive to gardening.

backyard garden sharing idea.

"We've had about 20 informal arrangements with people who want a garden in their back yard, but for whatever reason can't manage it themselves," Gord explains. "It might be a senior who hates to see space go unused, so ask us to match them up with someone willing to work and share the produce." This year, CHEP received funding from EcoFriendly to hire a mentor for backyard garden sharing matches throughout the growing season.

"I arranged a few matches last year and those people always gardened together," Gord says. "It's a social benefit for people like seniors who might be isolated. It's the best possible thing for older people who are able to get outside and this way they get social connections too."

There's a Buzz, and It's Not Just The Bees

Across North America, people are reconnecting with growing food. 



Carrot Crazy: Twenty-year-old U of S Arts and Science student Charisse Voldeng at the Varsity View Community Garden. Charisse and her mother try their hand at peas, carrots and potatoes, occasionally corn. "Our carrots are awesome! Mom and I were both really busy, but we managed to do the weeding and I felt really accomplished when I grew those great carrots."



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Some know their grandparents had this knowledge, but their parents not so much. Gord Androsoff, whose own background is agriculture and biology, says many people under 30 are anxious to learn what they consider a life skill. Urban food production may indeed open the gate to a potential career.

"Our community is not that far removed from agriculture, but we perceive having chickens within the city, for example, as going backwards," says Gord. "Places like Vancouver see it as progress. Many cities across Canada are envious of our community gardens." What is required, he adds, are the

kind of policy changes needed to allow more urban food production, access to land, and amendments to bylaws to allow a bountiful harvest from a variety of sources.

Charlie Clark, a gardener himself, believes urban food production is critical.

"In a time when our lives are increasingly mediated by

technology and screens, I think that creating these places for people to put their hands on the earth together in the middle of a city is hugely important." 

Karin Melberg Schwier



Prolific potatoes: "I rode my bike right by the garden so I'd stop to work a bit each day," says Linda Murphy. "There's nothing like being able to pluck a carrot or pull off a tomato that is absolutely pure, with no chemicals. It's especially wonderful for children to participate and enjoy the fruits of their labours."



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Craig Sillipant (left) with Mark "Shack" Loshack (right).

CRAIG SILLIPHANT

PETE LAWRENCE

HOME Food: BBQ

NOTHING SAYS SUMMER LIKE SHACK STEAK ON THE GRILL

We had it all planned out three months in advance. Since this would be the summer issue of Saskatoon HOME magazine, we wanted my food column to have a summer theme (especially considering that winter started at the beginning of October last year). It was time to rock a new season, so I asked Rock 102's Mark "Shack" Loshack to show me how to do some laid back, yard-style barbecuing. However, when the deadline was fast approaching and

spring still hadn't arrived, we determined that stupid Old Man Winter wasn't going to get the best of us, no sir! We decided to take it indoors and have our own summer kitchen party.

We set up a grill in Shack's kitchen, where he also films the Shaw Cable TV show *Cooked with Shack*, and set about making believe that it was summer. We had to really concentrate on pretending, especially when we had to take a break for Shack to run

out and free his wife's car from the evil clutches of an icy snow bank out front. But we have good imaginations, so we had our own indoor summer barbecue where Shack showed me how to cook a marinated flat iron steak with a charred corn and cilantro salad on the side.

Shack is host of Rock 102's *Morning Show with Shack, Watson, & Whitney*. He's a real dude's dude so I ask him, "Does being a whiz in the kitchen bode with

that image?"

"Hey, the ladies love a guy who can cook," Shack laughs.

Shack figures that credit for his love of cooking goes to his mother and grandmother, simply because they never kicked him out of the kitchen.

"I started when I was about four," Shack tells me, as he preps the grill. "I'd make French toast on Saturday mornings. I'd wear a brown paper lunch bag on my head to pretend I was a chef. I watched *The Galloping Gourmet* instead



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of Bugs Bunny. He'd drink more wine than he used in his recipes!"

Of course, most of us know the Shack on the radio, something that he came to in a similarly self-made manner. Cooking and broadcasting were

his passions, though he never had formal training in either and worked his way up the ladder to the coveted morning person chair in Saskatoon.

We get down to the business of cooking and Shack shows me the ingredients for the

marinade. He got the recipe from Executive Chef Drew Hornell at the lavish Delta Bessborough Hotel, and then modified it to his liking.

"There are basics to everything," Shack explains. "I like to take a great recipe and

then throw in my own things." As I watch him eyeball some of the measurements, I really get a sense of his cooking style – it's down-to-earth and high-quality without having to take himself too seriously, just like Shack himself. 



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Shack's marinated flat iron steak, with charred corn and cilantro summer salad.



It's an interesting reminder of how a chef's personality goes into his cooking.

After he puts the corn on the grill, Shack shows me how to make the marinade, a mix of orange juice, olive oil, peppercorns, various spices, and liquid smoke (see recipe).

"A lot of people don't like to use the liquid smoke because they think it's processed," Shack explains. "But look at the ingredients: water and smoke."

He mixes all the ingredients together and I help him pour it into a plastic bag, which we then insert the steak into. However, like a trueTV chef, he actually has one ready that he prepared 24 hours ago so that the marinade could permeate the meat itself. His family gets to eat all the meals he preps for TV, so it's win-win for them.

He puts the meat on the grill, a wonderfully huge piece of steak, searing both sides, before turning down the heat slightly to cook the inside properly.

"I buy all my meat at Prairie Meats, to keep it local," he says.

While the steak is cooking, we make the salad, starting with cutting the now charred kernels off the corn into a bowl. Shack chops a few more ingredients, and we add Roma tomatoes, an orange pepper, chopped cilantro, arugula, some salt and pepper, and lemon juice and olive oil.

When the steak is done, we take it off the grill, let it rest for a few minutes, then slice it into thin strips (making sure to cut against the grain). It's a beautiful medium rare. Shack brings the leftover marinade to a boil to kill any bacteria from the raw meat, and then pours it over the steak, a sauce to further those flavours.

Shack and I talk about what makes his menu choice today a particularly "summery"

meal, beyond the fact that a nicely grilled steak and charred corn would remind anyone of barbecue season.

"Well, the citrus in the marinade really comes out," explains Shack, "which, of course, gives you a light, summery feeling."

I grab a fork and dig in, and he's right. The marinade does have a summer flavour of citrus, but another thing I notice is the peppercorns, which have softened in the marinade overnight, lending a yielding, peppery accent to the dish. The smoke also comes through, but the great thing about this marinade is that it's subtle so while you get all these flavours and textures working in unison, they also prop up the hero of the dish, which is the meat itself. Everything works together, a concerto of the grill.

The side salad is a feathery compliment to the more robust steak; for starters, adding to the summer theme, it's an explosion of beautiful colour, greens and oranges and reds, like a garden on the plate. As well, the light dressing mixed with that bright cilantro flavour reminds me of a soft, summer breeze on my tongue.

Hopefully the weather is nice when you read this, and you can recreate this meal on your own deck, with your actual barbecue. Because on the so-called "spring" day that Shack showed me how to prepare these delectable dishes, when I closed my eyes for just a moment and tasted them, I could almost feel summer. I can only imagine what experience you'll have creating it for your friends or family on an actual wonderful barbecuing day. 🍴

Craig Silliphant

THE RECIPES

Shack's Charred Corn and Cilantro Summer Salad

2 ears of corn (grilled and the kernels cut off)
2 Roma tomatoes
1 orange pepper
chopped cilantro
arugula
1:1 mixture of olive oil and lemon juice
salt & pepper

SHACK'S MARINATED FLAT IRON STEAK

2 tsp paprika
2 tsp chili powder
2 tsp garlic powder
2 tsp onion powder
2 tsp old bay seasoning
1 tsp ginger (grated)
3 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp peppercorns
1 tsp Italian seasoning
1 cup orange juice
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp soya sauce
¼ tsp liquid smoke
2 tsp mustard
1 tbsp molasses
1 tsp hot sauce
(optional, but Shack loves it!)
1 tbsp vinegar
And of course, 1 flank or flat iron steak

Combine all the marinade ingredients in a bowl, and then pour into a large ziplock bag. Add the steak, squeeze out all the air, then zip it shut. Put the bag in the fridge for about 24 hours. When barbecuing, make sure the grill temperature is around 500 degrees, sear both sides for 2 minutes, and then decrease heat to about 400 degrees. Let the steak cook for 5 to 6 minutes per side (depending on the degree of doneness you require). Remove meat from grill, let rest under foil for about ten minutes, then slice (against the grain), and serve.



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The Broadway Bridge officially opened, just eleven frantic months after construction began.



1932 – “Falsework” supporting arches 4 and 5 while they are being poured.



JEFF O'BRIEN

Photo Courtesy: City of Saskatoon Archives

The Bessborough Hotel as seen through an arch of the newly completed Broadway Bridge.

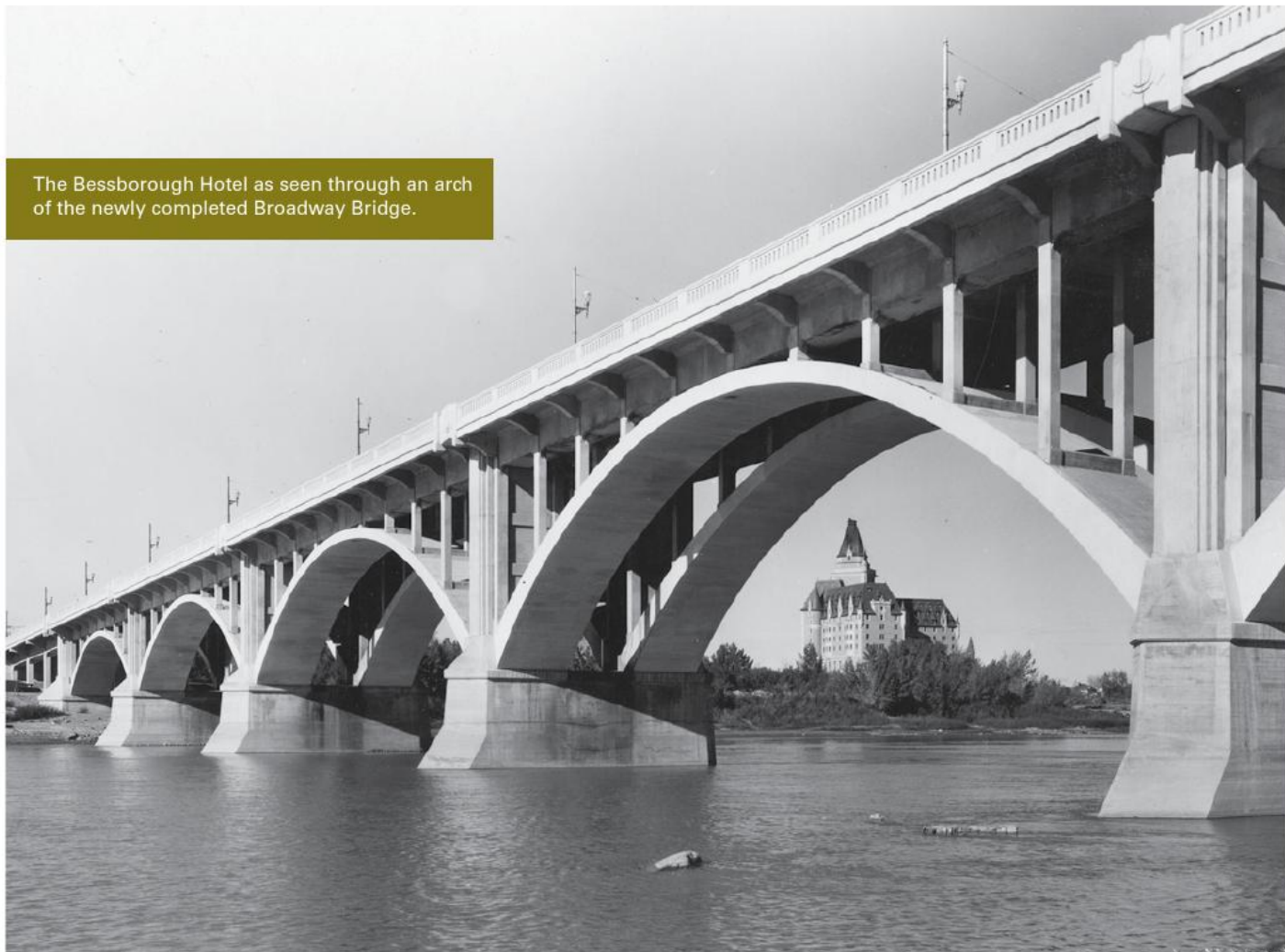


Photo Courtesy: City of Saskatoon Archives

Although the “Roaring ‘20s” probably didn’t roar quite as loudly in Saskatoon as they did elsewhere, it was still a time of prosperity and optimism. The city’s economy had been stumbling since the Great Bust of 1913, and through the war years and recession that followed. The early 1920s had been a period of recovery and rebuilding. By 1925, we were finally shaking ourselves free from our long, economic winter, and in the late ‘20s, during the “Second Boom,” as it is sometimes called, Saskatoon shone.

It was a period of high expectation in these parts. Saskatchewan residents boasted one of the highest net incomes in the world in 1928. Saskatoon’s

population, which had shrunk after 1912, was growing again. City crews were hard at work putting in much-needed infrastructure – laying sewer and

national airways network. Even the real estate speculators – forgetting the lessons of 1913 – were again buying up property in the hopes of a quick resale.

Saskatchewan residents boasted one of the highest net incomes in the world in 1928.

water pipe, stringing electrical lines, pouring sidewalks and gravelling and paving streets. Air travel was all the rage. Saskatoon’s first “air harbour,” run by the Saskatoon Aero Club with a grant from the city, went into service in the late 1920s, part of Canada’s rapidly growing

The future looked very bright indeed.

A New Link Needed

But we desperately needed a new bridge. Saskatoon has always been the City of River-Crossing Devices, beginning with the first ferry service established

in 1884. By 1929, there were two bridges for vehicles – the 1907 Traffic Bridge, and the University Bridge, which had been finished in 1916. But Saskatoon’s population had more than doubled since then, as had the number of cars. As well, streetcars were still crossing on the narrow Traffic Bridge, with its steep climb up the Long Hill on the Nutana side, and ticklishly sharp bend at the end; the scene of a number of minor and one very major derailment, in 1922, that saw a streetcar go end-over-end down the riverbank to the ice below.

So when the Town Planning Board was established in 1927, one of its recommendations was for a new traffic bridge 

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to connect Broadway with the downtown. That report was completed in 1929, the same year the Roaring Twenties ended with a stock market crash, and Saskatoon, along with the rest of the world, fell headlong into the Great Depression.

The Broadway Bridge is, therefore, a child of the Depression, even if it was conceived in the euphoria of the decade before. In 1930, with the unemployment rolls growing

ominously, it and the 19th street railway underpass (demolished in 2006) were proposed as make-work projects for men on relief. The city appointed C.J. Mackenzie, Dean of the University of Saskatchewan College of Engineering, to head up the project. Design work was done by U of S engineering graduates, and all but two of the construction engineers were also U of S graduates. The budget was \$850,000. \$360,000 of that



Feb. 26, 1932 – workers pour concrete for Pier No. 3, one wheelbarrow load at a time.

Photo Courtesy: City of Saskatoon Archives

came from the city and the rest from the federal and provincial governments. Funding was in place by the end of November and work began on December 28, 1931.

Depression Dollars at Work

A total of 1,593 men worked on the bridge. Only married men were hired. They worked 7-hour shifts, and the men were rotated out when they had reached a monthly maximum of \$25.00 to

\$37.50, depending on the size of the man's family. This was so

Indeed, this provision had been in all city contracts for a year.

The Broadway Bridge is, therefore, a child of the Depression, even if it was conceived in the euphoria of the decade before.

as to spread the money out as far as possible. For the same reason, as much of the work as could be, was done by hand.

As one historian has written, "In hard times, the machine became an enemy."

The work went on, day and

night, Sundays and holidays, without stopping. The winter of 1932 was particularly bad, with temperatures regularly dropping below -30 C, and cold winds tearing at the men as they trundled their endless wheelbarrow loads of concrete along the high, narrow catwalks out to where the piers were being poured. Still the work went on. The piers were finished in March – and how the men must have breathed a sigh of relief 



11:30 am, Nov. 11, 1932 – Saskatoon's newest bridge officially opens to traffic.

with the end of winter that year – and the retaining walls and approach spans were poured that spring. The arches and the bridge floor were poured over the summer and fall, and on November 11, 1932, the Broadway Bridge officially opened, just eleven frantic months after construction began.

Like the University Bridge just downstream, the Broadway Bridge is an open spandrel deck arch bridge. It is made of reinforced concrete and is about 1250 feet long – 650 feet of which is over water – and 65 feet wide. With a grade of four per cent, it is Saskatoon's steepest bridge. Also like the University Bridge, tracks were laid down it for the street cars of the Saskatoon Municipal Railway. Unlike the University Bridge, these tracks were actually used, starting in the summer of 1933, when the streetcar routes were shifted to cross the river on the Broadway Bridge instead

of the Traffic Bridge.

Construction of the bridge successfully distributed \$324,000 in wages to Saskatoon's unemployed households, or about \$200 for each man who worked on it. Almost all of the materials used in the construction were sourced locally from companies such as John East Ironworks, Richardson Road Machinery, C.H. Wentz Lumber, Mackenzie and Thayer, and Scott's Machine Shop. This helped spread the money even farther through the community.

An Overarching Symbol

The Broadway Bridge is a Saskatoon icon, and justifiably so. Like the elegant Bessborough Hotel just downstream, it is symbolic of the Great Depression, and the way we held on – sometimes, it seemed, by fingernails alone – through the darkest years the city had seen to date. It is 



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fitting that the Bessborough, seen through an arch of the Broadway Bridge, is the most single most photographed view in Saskatoon. City Council even once directed the City Engineer to determine the best location on the riverbank for taking that exact shot, with the idea of putting a pedestal there so that visitors could simply put their camera down, press the button, and get a professional quality photo every time.

For those who lived through it, the Great Depression was not great at all. In 1932, one person in five in Saskatoon was receiving some kind of government hand-out just to survive. Single unemployed men were being herded into government-run concentration camps or into work camps up north. It was a period of quiet and sometimes not-so-quiet desperation. But right in the middle of it,

Saskatoon built the prettiest bridge on the prairies. How is that for a triumph of human spirit? 

Jeff O'Brien

Built in response to the economic devastation of the Great Depression, Saskatoon's Broadway Bridge is the most photographed of the city's bridges. Although most of the costs were paid by the federal and provincial governments, it is truly a "made in Saskatoon" structure, and a reminder that things which are useful can also be beautiful.

A view from atop the Bessborough hotel as a streetcar crosses the new bridge in the summer of 1933.

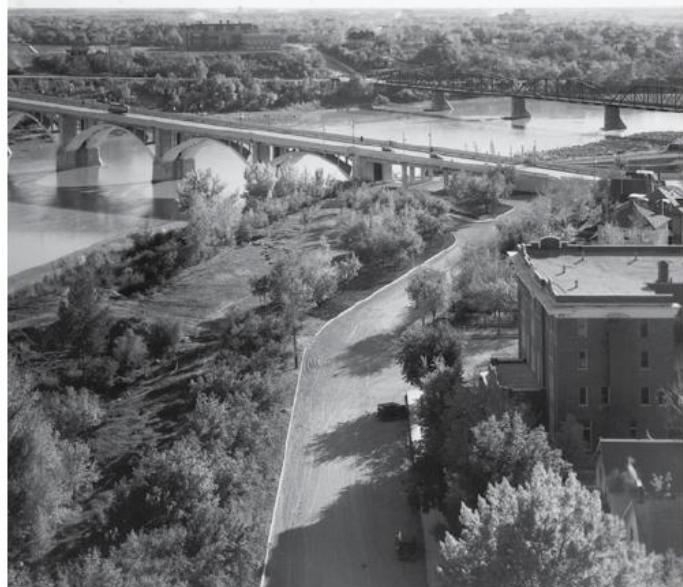


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 **JEFF O'BRIEN**

Top 10 Definitely Don'ts of Landscaping

1. Don't Start Without a Plan

Seems obvious, but it's surprising how many of us leap first and think later. A plan will save you time, money and frustration, allowing you to spot pitfalls and bad ideas before you start spending money. You'll also be less likely to change your mind halfway through. Plus, for big projects, advance planning will help you do the job in stages. And you probably won't have to re-do things nearly as often. On the other hand, you know what they say: "Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment." So take your pick. If

you don't know where to start, hiring a landscape designer is a very valuable resource to set you on the right track. You can then take that plan and bring it to life yourself or hire someone to help.

2. Don't Build It If You Can't Take Care of It

The problem with that beautiful garden oasis you just finished building is that if you don't stay on top of it, it will turn into an untamed beast, a raging monster instead of a peaceful, backyard retreat. If you've ever read Stephen King's *The Shining*, you'll know just how ugly it can get

when good gardens go bad. The trick is to build what you have time to maintain. Your backyard should be a place you go to heal your stress, not one that causes you stress. Tweak your dream a little if you have to.

3. Don't Plant It if You Don't Have Room For It

Plants are like puppies – they're cute, but they pee all over the carpet and chase the neighbour's cat. Probably if your plants are doing those things, you should be buying them from somewhere else. But trees and bushes do grow, and sooner or later that darling little

evergreen will be knocking the wind out of you every morning when it comes bounding into the room and jumps up on the bed. So think ahead. Our friends at Sawyer's said, "Don't plant it so close to your patio that you can touch it when it is only two feet tall."

4. Don't Be Static

Your landscape needs some movement. Straight lines are dreary. A curved path slows down the eye and foot and adds interest. Plus, if you've got something to hide behind, it's way easier to jump out and scare the mailman that way.

5. Don't Ignore the Front Yard

A nice front yard gives you that all-important "curb appeal." It also improves your neighbourhood. Everybody wins.

6. Don't Wait Until Afterwards to Install the Sprinkler System

I know. You're thinking, "Who would do that?" Just take it from me. Sprinklers, THEN sod.

7. Don't Start and End With Sod

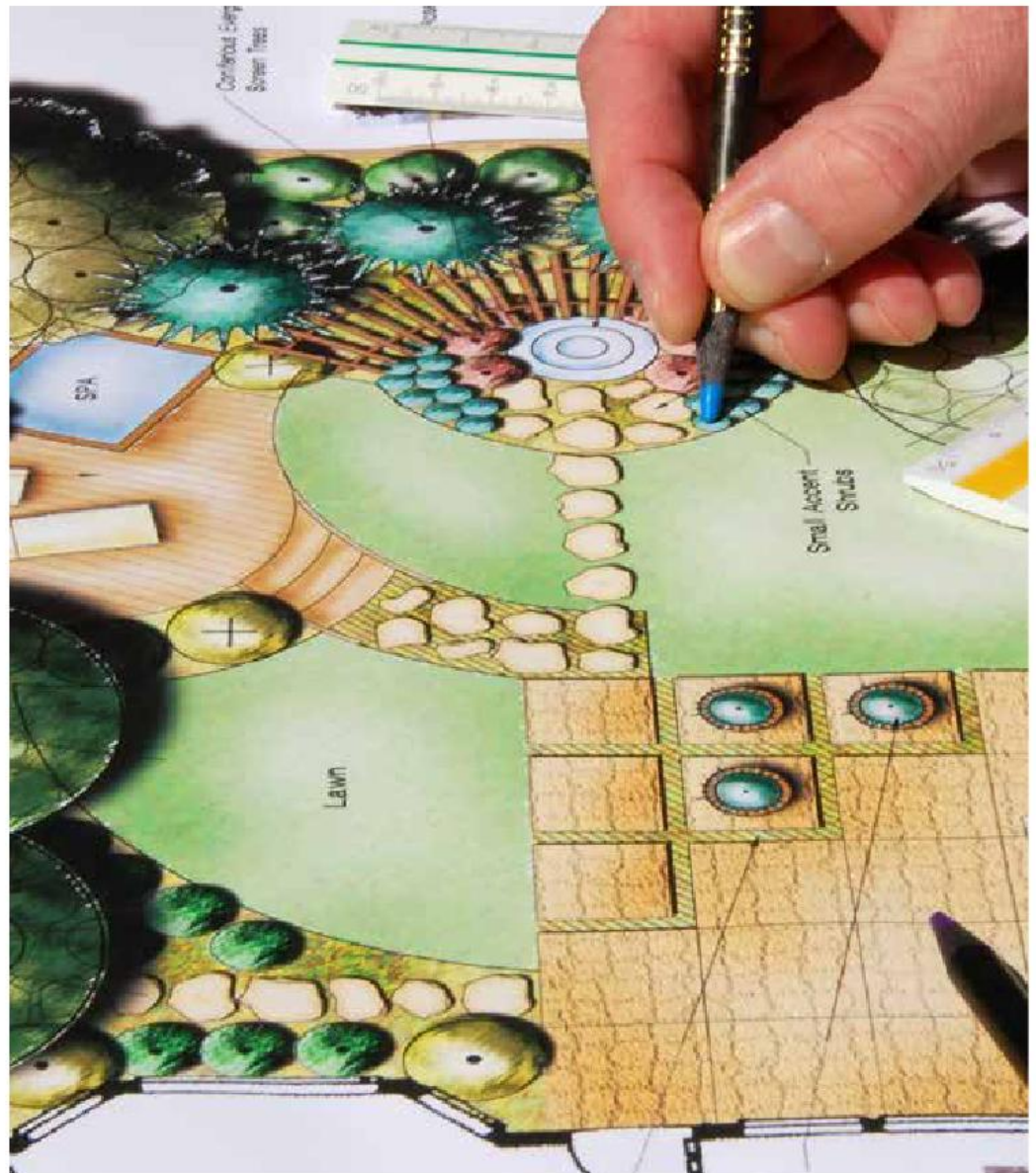
While it's true that a nice bit of close-cropped turf is a must-have if you like to kick a soccer ball around or have a real thing for croquet, but why stop there? Xeriscaping, natural plantings, water features, vegetable gardens, fruit trees ... the list of creative and interesting things you can do with your yard that don't involve mowing lawns is nearly endless.

8. Don't Clutter

Keep your perennials and flowerbeds simple at first and figure on adding and subtracting down the road.

9. Don't Stumble Around in the Dark

Yards are for nighttime too. Light it up! Lights are cool, 



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lights are fun, lights make neat shadows and add mystery and texture. A little good planning will help you work out the best way to light your yard.

10. Don't Cheap Out on Your Dirt

Plants need good dirt. If you're building a motocross track in your back yard, go for the cheapest fill you can find. But if you're hoping to grow things, pay the extra for topsoil with the appropriate amendments (manure, peat moss, compost, or whatever). This will be different depending on what you're doing, so ask; those nice folks at the garden store will have the answers. 

With thanks to Norm and Les at Sawyer's Trees and Landscapes for their assistance with this article.

Jeff O'Brien







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